

Background on chronic homelessness in Minnesota

Introduction

This fact sheet is based on personal interviews conducted with homeless adults and juveniles on October 24, 2000. It represents the most current data available on the characteristics of homeless persons in Minnesota. The next statewide study of homelessness will be conducted on October 23, 2003. Approximately three months following the completion of data collection, preliminary updated information on homelessness in Minnesota will be available. Both studies represent one-night snapshots of homelessness in our state.

Chronic homelessness

This fact sheet uses the following definition: a person who has been homeless for a period of 12 months or longer is defined as chronically homeless. Children in families who have been homeless for 12 months or longer are also defined as chronically homeless.

Survey facts

The Minnesota Statewide Survey conducted on October 24, 2000 identified 4,410 homeless adults and unaccompanied juveniles who were represented by personal interviews conducted in 288 locations throughout the state. With this group were 3,305 children age 17 or younger.

Of the adults and unaccompanied juveniles represented in the survey, 1,531 (35%) can be described as chronically homeless based on the above definition. This group was accompanied by 1,015 children (31% of the total children represented by the study).

Chronically homeless adults and unaccompanied juveniles

Of the 1,531 adults and unaccompanied juveniles identified as chronically homeless:

- 668 (44%) reported a serious or persistent mental illness
- 458 (30%) reported a chemical dependency problem
- 306 of these (20% of the 1531) reported a dual diagnosis of both mental illness and chemical dependency
- 711 (44%) did *not* have a serious or persistent mental illness or chemical dependency problem

Other conditions likely to affect chronic homelessness

It is believed that chronic health conditions, domestic violence, and criminal history are also likely to affect the length of time a person might be homeless. Of the 1,531 chronically homeless persons:

- 655 (43%) identified a chronic health condition, of whom 239 (16% of the 1,531) did not also have mental illness or chemical dependency
- 227 (15%) had a history of domestic violence, of whom 103 (7%) did not also have mental illness or chemical dependency
- 394 (26%) had a criminal history affecting their housing status, of whom 102 (7%) did not also have mental illness or chemical dependency.

Taking all three of these categories into account, survey results show that of the original 1,531 persons found to be chronically homeless, 348 (23%) have none of the five problems listed above (mental illness, chemical dependency, chronic illness, domestic violence or criminal history).

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Children

Of the 1,015 children in families headed by chronically homeless adults and juveniles, 362 (36%) lived with a parent with a serious mental illness, and 99 (10%) lived with a parent with a serious alcohol or chemical dependency problem. In addition, of children with chronically homeless families *without* mental illness or chemical dependency:

- 207 (20% of the 1,015) lived with a parent with a chronic health problem
- 164 (16%) lived with a parent who had been a victim of domestic violence
- 79 (8%) lived with a parent who had a criminal history

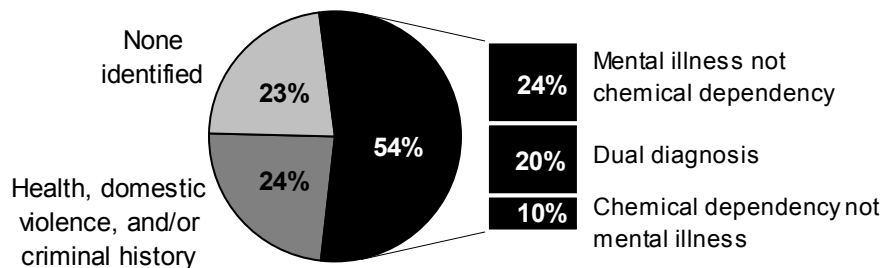
In all, 283 (28%) of the 1,015 children living in chronically homeless families were not affected by any of the five problem areas listed above.

Annual estimates

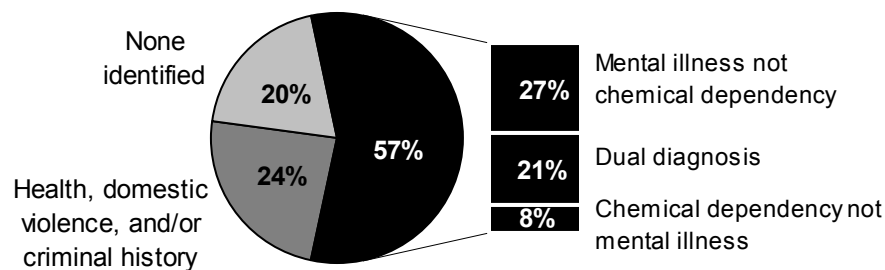
Attempts to use these data to produce annual estimates of the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness in Minnesota can only provide approximations. There is no reliable methodology for using cross-sectional data to produce annual population estimates. Wilder Research Center uses a conservative approach based on observed Ramsey County annual shelter usage. On this basis we estimate that the number of homeless persons over the course of a full year with any particular characteristic is likely to be at least twice the number of persons found with that characteristic on a single-night survey. Thus, the total number of chronically homeless adults in the year 2000 is estimated to be no fewer than 3,060 and the total number of chronically homeless children in these families would be no fewer than 2,030.

PREVALENCE OF MENTAL ILLNESS/CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY AND OTHER BARRIERS, BY HOUSING TYPE

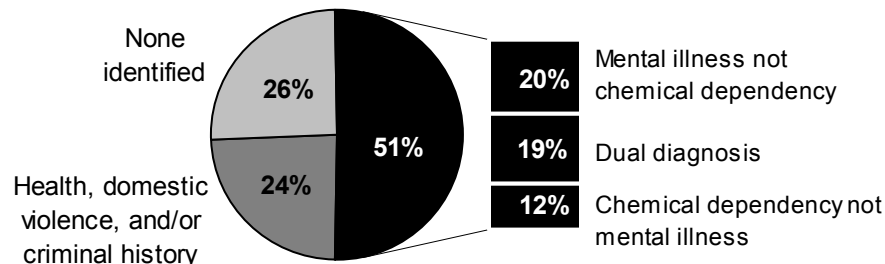
OVERALL



TRANSITIONAL HOUSING



EMERGENCY AND NON-SHELTERED



| | Overall | | Transitional housing | | Emergency and non-sheltered | |
|--|------------|------------|----------------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Number homeless > 1 year | 1,531 | 100% | 792 | 100% | 739 | 100% |
| Mental illness but not chemical dependency | 362 | 24% | 216 | 27% | 147 | 20% |
| Chemical dependency but not mental illness | 152 | 10% | 65 | 8% | 88 | 12% |
| Dual diagnosis | 306 | 20% | 167 | 21% | 139 | 19% |
| <i>TOTAL: Mental illness and/or chemical dependency</i> | <i>820</i> | <i>54%</i> | <i>448</i> | <i>57%</i> | <i>374</i> | <i>51%</i> |
| Neither mental illness or chemical dependency | 711 | 47% | 344 | 43% | 365 | 49% |
| Chronic health problems, domestic violence, and/or criminal history (and <u>not</u> mental illness or chemical dependency) | 362 | 24% | 186 | 24% | 176 | 24% |
| None of these 5 problems identified | 348 | 23% | 158 | 20% | 189 | 26% |
| Chronic health problems | 655 | 43% | 322 | 41% | 333 | 45% |
| With mental illness and/or chemical dependency | 416 | 27% | 210 | 27% | 206 | 28% |
| Without mental illness and/or chemical dependency | 239 | 16% | 112 | 14% | 127 | 17% |
| Domestic violence* | 227 | 15% | 162 | 21% | 65 | 9% |
| With mental illness and/or chemical dependency | 124 | 8% | 94 | 12% | 30 | 4% |
| Without mental illness and/or chemical dependency | 103 | 7% | 68 | 9% | 35 | 5% |
| Criminal history | 394 | 26% | 186 | 24% | 207 | 28% |
| With mental illness and/or chemical dependency | 292 | 19% | 138 | 17% | 154 | 21% |
| Without mental illness and/or chemical dependency | 102 | 7% | 48 | 6% | 54 | 7% |

***Notes:** Domestic violence percents shown as proportion of all homeless persons, not just of women.
Percents may not total to 100 because of rounding.

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For more information

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